U.S. to Have Its Own Palace of the Seas

What the Reconditioning of the Leviathan, Formerly Vaterland and Germany's Pride, Means in Actual Work for Thousands in All Sorts of Craft and How America's Millions Will Be Spent to Make the Restored Ocean Giantess Finer Than Any Vessel That Sails the Seven Seas

THE announcement made a few days ago that at last it had been definitely decided to refit and restore the great steamship Leviathan, formerly the Vaterland, has drawn the attention of almost every port in the world to the somewhat romantic fate of what was once—and now again will be—the world's most splendid palace of the seas.

To speak of refitting a steamship means to most people a mere task for a lot of ship carpenters hired for a chance job. To refit and reclaim the great Leviathan means to probably nine-tenths of the people of the United States a ship chandler's task to be accomplished casually—perhaps with a few buckets of soapsuds and paint and well wielded brushes.

But of course, even those who think of reconditioning the former pride of the German merchant marine as being such a simple task as this know that the Vaterland was the "last word" in palatial passenger ships—that she cost the equivalent of ten million gold dollars to build—just before the great war began—and that, when she fell into the hands of the United States she was used to carry our soldiers to France. Incidentally, the Leviathan transported altogether about 185,000 to Europe during the war; and on each trip she carried from 8,000 to 10,000—enough of them at a time to almost fight a great battle without reenforcements.

It is only those who live close to seaports, or who have made a point of knowing something of the immense undertaking the Leviathan represents who can visualize the enormity of activity epitomized in that simple announcement that the former Vaterland, now flying the flag of this country, is to be made ready again to sail wherever in all the Seven Seas the ocean is deep enough for her tremendous hull.

One Hundred Draftsmen Needed to Plan a Part

Elsewhere on this page is a photograph of one part of a great room in which a hundred architectural draftsmen are at work over plans and blueprints, with drawing boards, calculation tables, compasses and squares at hand. One might well and reasonably suppose these hundred experts were engaged in laying out the plans for a whole city, perhaps; or, at least, for some great architectural project involving hundreds of acres of ground—or a super-sky-scraper.

But, instead, they are just one little group, distinct from many others, drawing up plans which—after awhile—will guide thousands of workmen engaged in repairing the damage inflicted by war and neglect upon the mightiest of steamships. Nor is it only for a week or a month that these hundred trained draftsmen have been at work—it is for many months, almost a solid year. Consider this: Ten of them could, in a single month, perfect the plans for the entire construction, from groundwork to roof garden, of New York's greatest hotel.

Designers and contractors and experts in other lines have been at work for a long while engaged in other preparatory tasks. Soon, now, the workmen, mechanics, steamfitters, carpenters, decorators and members of countless other crafts and trades will be actually at work; and every working day for a year they will be busy before the giant liner may again sail.

And when the day comes when she does put out again, this time under the Stars and Stripes, the most magnificent vessel that ever sailed under any emblem will have been reborn on the high seas. The Majestic, to be launched in April under the banner of Britain, will be a scant two tons greater; but neither the Majestic nor any dream ship will be a more luxurious and perfectly appointed palace than the American Leviathan.

Also on this page are two photographs which tell in a startling way the history of the greatest of the liners. One shows the Vaterland—proud, haughty and efficient mistress of the Kaiser's commercial fleet. When she was launched mariners in all the seas of the earth shook their heads and opined that the world was moving too fast. Perhaps a glimpse at the swimming pool (large enough for a hundred bathers) built between decks—also shown in the photographs—may serve to explain the astonishment of the reactionary seamen who declared the world was advancing too rapidly. But this swimming pool on a passenger ship was only one of the marvels of the great, new, luxurious vessel. Its cabins de luxe, its complete theater, its sun parlors and palm rooms, and its six story elevator service were others.

Stupendous! A veritable Babel of the sea!

Then, the other photograph! The Leviathan of to-day. Here is a glimpse of tragedy. Gray and barren and crumbling like some ancient temple ruin of the Orient. Magnificent and splendid no longer, but gigantic still, the sea Colossus lies in neglect and ignominy at a pier in Hoboken. A paradise for rats and vermin now, when she was only a short time ago the high pride of the last great imperial monarchy. Nothing is left of her former splendor. It is death—and decay.

The swimming pool space was too precious when soldiers were being hurried to war; so it was emptied and bunks were arranged, three tiers high, over the marble floor, for a whole company of khaki clad passengers. The rare woods from every clime were torn out and costly tapestries were removed. Luxury was sacrificed to mere space.

When there was no longer need of such a huge transport the Leviathan seemed to have become useless. No shipping firm would at the time undertake the enormous task of refitting the vessel. She has lain in the dock at Hoboken for two and a half years. Now, however, the Government has decided to have the Leviathan's former glory restored, so that she may again be "the most wondrous thing afloat." She has been the embodiment of death and decay, but she is to be reborn.

It cost Germany $10,000,000 to build its Vaterland. It will cost the United States $8,000,000 to restore its Leviathan. If a new vessel of such size and such elegance were to be built in this country in these post-war times, its cost would be more than $20,000,000. But the vessel is to be restored to a new grandeur, a greater glory than was hers at her first birth, in the remodeling.

It will require more than a year to recondition the giant ship. We soon shall see two thousand men at work between decks with hammers and saws, but, really, more than a hundred thousand will be engaged in some part of the work.

Out in the American forests of the West and the South lumberjacks will find additional work to do in cutting the finest timbers—trees which have been cherished to be felled for only extraordinary use. The extraordinary use is here at last. These timbers will be floated down the streams to the mill centers, to be planed and cut carefully. Ultimately the wood, in its polished, finished state, will go to the shipyards where the Leviathan is to be reborn, and American lumber will go into the vessel, which is to sail under the American flag—a rival and challenge to the future.

Except for her shell the Leviathan will be American made through and through. Her decks are to be fitted out like the floors of the finest American mansion. Her lounges, saloons and cabins, smoking rooms and drawing rooms will be the most splendid any ship has ever had. In every interior detail she will be a new vessel when the work of reconditioning is complete.

The Pompeian Swimming pool, one of the luxurious appointments to be restored to the Leviathan, a pool that rivals anything of its kind ashore.

At left the Vaterland as she first appeared in New York before the war, Queen of the Seas.

One corner of the great room where more than one hundred draftsmen are busy on plans to restore the Queen of the Seas to her former glory and where work is planned for thousands of men and women.

Above—The Leviathan resting in her slip at Hoboken, only the mere shell of a great liner.

all the fittings that the new and great Leviathan will require would call for pages. But consider these, all of whom will be engaged in the greatest single task of their working lives, and you may be able to imagine how great a number of men will be given work in accomplishing the reconditioning of the greatest and finest of ocean liners.

How It Appears in Contrast To a Great New York Hotel

Perhaps the best way to give an impression of the grandiose elegance and pompous luxury of the projected sea palace is to make a necessarily inadequate comparison of it to a great New York hotel.

The Pennsylvania is a tremendous hotel. Its capacity is, at the most, something like 2,500 guests. The Waldorf-Astoria is as magnificently appointed as any hotel in this country of fine hotels; it is smaller than the Pennsylvania.

The new Leviathan is going to be a floating hotel of more than twice the size and capacity of the Pennsylvania, and of greater luxury than any hotel could rival.

Out on the sea there is nothing which presents itself as a fitting comparison for the huge vessel. It is hard to be impressed with the Leviathan's great mass and bulk, since she established her own standard. But if she were brought to land and stood on her stern beside the Woolworth tower she would condescend to look down from an advantage of some two hundred feet above the tip of the Woolworth flag pole. And if the Leviathan's stern were placed against the northernmost fence of City Hall Park she would cut through the old post office and her prow would rest in the cemetery of St. Paul's Churchyard.

A thousand years may bring such things upon the seas as none but men called crazy dare to dream of now. A thousand years from now there may be floating cities—cities built upon great rafts, miles wide, with homes and governments and businesses of their own. But now the nearest thing to a floating city is the Leviathan.

And that would not have been dreamed of a thousand years ago—nor a hundred!

And her machinery and every incident to her power is to be the result of brains and pains and effort bestowed upon her by American artists, American architects, American engineers and American labor.

New, powerful oil burning engines will give hundreds of machine workers additional tasks; more will be employed in fitting the machinery into the vessel. Go back to the mines from which the metals to be used in remaking the Leviathan are mined and see that many men will find work in extracting the ores. Consider the transportation element—the men who will be engaged in hauling the steel, the lumber and the various materials to the railways; the men who will find employment in conducting it by rail through various courses to the shipyards, and those who will unload it.

Consider the furniture makers, the concrete workers, the workers in carpet factories, the pipe makers, porcelain and china workers, makers of tapestries—makers of

When a Washington's Birthday Parade was an Event

By AN EYE WITNESS.

THE booming of cannon heard all over the city at sunrise on the 22d of February more than half a century ago proclaimed to New Yorkers the greatest holiday of the year, not excepting the Fourth of July.

The procession in honor of the birth of the Father of his Country was anticipated with eager expectation. How happy were those fortunate ones whose houses happened to front on Broadway, up which street the procession always marched! Windows were reserved for favored friends before the day arrived and were filled with eager faces long before the hour appointed for the parade.

To those accustomed to the monotonous sameness of uniforms in this day, neat and trim as they undoubtedly are, the variety presented by a Washington's Birthday procession in the late '40's would be a revelation. The officers of that day, whose epaulets were heavily fringed with gold, would no doubt have despised the simplicity of mere shoulder straps.

First came the police, tall and lanky, ununiformed, and often with the height accentuated by the wearing of an old fashioned "tile" much the worse for wear, the star upon the breast being the only insignia of office of the early New York police.

Next came the Washington Grays (afterward the Seventh Regiment) in handsome uniforms, mounted, and wearing white plumed helmets; following them the veterans—veterans of the War of 1812; veterans of the Mexican War, but lately ended, and one or two who claimed to be survivors of the Revolution, these last marching with painful haste in a pathetic attempt to keep pace with the younger soldiers.

The Lafayette Guard had a prominent place in the procession. This organization was formed from some of the city's finest French citizens, of whom there were many at this time, and accompanied by the inevitable *vivandiere*. The memory of Lafayette, and of his services to this country, always gained for these a mighty cheer.

The Continentals followed their erstwhile companions in arms, in the well known buff and blue, famous in pictures of the Revolutionary days. The bare kneed Highlanders, kilted and with tartans indicating the different clans to which they belong, followed next, the bagpipes playing wildly.

Then, in quick succession, came the gay Hussars, on prancing steeds, in all the bravery of their gold embroidered jackets (which were worn on one shoulder only, the empty sleeve being flung over the other) and their crimson tasseled caps; Grenadiers, their faces hidden beneath the frowning immensity of their bearskin hats, strapped under their chins, in the uniform perpetuated by the Old Guard; sappers and miners, making a goodly showing in new leather aprons and gleaming axes carried over the shoulder.

At length the rattle of artillery wagons over the cobblestones warns the spectators, much to their regret, that the parade is approaching its end. The heavy gun carriages lumber on. The soldiers seated on them, with folded arms, in an attitude of supreme indifference, give the onlooker the impression that it was thus, imperturbable that they met the fire of the enemy—an attitude of which the crowd of spectators manifests both admiration and approval.

The Volunteer Firemen, closing the procession, make a fine showing. The red shirted heroes of many fires, formed in hollow squares, holding the ropes attached to their beloved engines, pulled them after them, all decked with wreaths of flowers and burnished like the sun.